

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05

PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-15 DHA-02 COME-00 EB-07

LAB-04 SIL-01 IO-10 OES-05 FEAE-00 /108 W

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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3178

UNCLAS NEW DELHI 0157

DEPT PLEASE PASS TO NESA

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, IN, US

SUBJECT: MINE DISASTER: PRESS REPORTS

1. ALTHOUGH WE ARE NOW ENTERING THE SECOND WEEK SINCE THE OCCURANCE OF THE CHASNOLA MINE DISASTER, DEWATERING OPERATIONS RETRIBUTIONS TO FAMILITIES OF THE TRAPPED MINERS AND OTHER ACTIVITIES RELATED TO THIS EVENT ARE STILL FRONT PAGE NEWS IN MOST INDIAN PAPERS. MOST PAPERS ALSO CONTINUE TO CARRY SOME RAY OF HOPE FOR FINDING SURVIVORS IN POCKETS OF TRAPPED AIR.

2. ATTRIBUTING THEIR INFORMATION TO LEADING MINING ENGINEERS THE PATRIOT REPORTS THERE ARE CHANCES OF SOME SURVIVORS OUT OF THE 372 TRAPPED MINERS IN THE CHASNOLA MINES IF AIR POCKETS HAD BEEN FORMED ESPECIALLY BETWEEN HORIZON ONE AND THE LEC TUNNEL WHERE SLASHING METHOD OF MINING WAS GOING ON." "THE ENGINEERS, TOLD UNI TODAY THAT THE POINT WAS ABOUT SEVEN METERS ABOVE NUMBER ONE HORIZON AND AS SUCH THOSE MINERS WHO HAPPENED TO BE PRESENT THERE WHEN THE AIR POCKET WAS FORMED MIGHT BE SAVED, IF DEWATERING WAS COMPLETED IN TIME." IN CONTRAST, THE JANUARY 3 EDITION OF THE HINDU OF MADRAS SAYS "THE INUNDATION OF THE COLLIERY OCCURRED ALMOST IN A

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FLASH AND EVERYTHING INSIDE WAS SMASHED BY THE LETHAL FORCE OF THE

GUSHING WATER." A PAPER PREPARED BY THE ENGINEERS OF THE BHARAT COKING COAL LTD., SAYS THAT THE WATER IN THE ADJACENT ABANDONED MINE TORE A 21 METER HIGH BREACH AND FLOODED THE MINE AT A RATE OF ABOUT 100,000 CUBIC FEET PER SECOND. THE INUNDATION WAS OVER IN THREE MINUTES."

3. THE JANUARY 4 PATRIOT ALSO CARRIES A SEPARATE ARTICLE "WHY REQUEST TO US WAS WITHDRAWN" IT SAYS " THE REQUEST TO THE US FOR HIGH PRESSURE PUMPS FOR DEWATERING OPERATIONS IN CHASNOLA HAD TO BE WITHDRAWN BECAUSE THE US AUTHORITIES BEGAN TO LAY DN LONG WINDING PROCEDURES FOR THEIR DELIVERY. ALTHOUGH THE US WAS THE FIRST TO BE CONTACTED FOR HELP PROCEDURES FOR DELIVERY OF ITS PUMPS HAD NOT BEEN COMPLETED WHEN PUMPS FROM SOVIET UNION AND POLAND HAD LANDED IN CALCUTTA." "SOURCES ARE RELUCTANT TO COMMENT ON WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN THE CAUSE FOR THE US DELAY PROCEDURES. THE COINCIDENCE WITH THE KAMAGATA MARU NAGAR (THE RECENT AICC) SESSION IS NOTED, BUT THERE IS NO INTENTION TO IMPUTE POLITICAL MOTIVES TO THE PURELY HAMANITARIAN ISSUE."

5. IN TODAY'S (JANUARY 5) STATESMAN " A NEW GRIM BATTLE FOR THE RESCUE OF THE TRAPPED MINERS FROM THE FLOODED CHASNOLA COLLIERY WILL BEGIN ON TUESDAY WHEN FOUR RUSSIAN PUMPS NOW BEING INSTALLED, GO INTO ACTION. ACCORDING TO OFFICIAL REPORTS, OF THE 14 PUMPS OPERATING NOW THREE WERE WITHDRAWN ON THE EIGHTH DAY OF THE TRAGEDY TODAY (JANUARY 4) TO MAKE ROOM FOR THE HIGH-CAPACITY RUSSIAN PUMPS. AS A RESULT THE DEWATERING CAPACITY WAS REDUCED FROM 8,400 GALLONS TO 6,800 GALLONS A MINUTE". THE FOUR HORIZONTAL POLISH PUMPS, WHICH WERE TO BE USED AFTER REACHING THE FIRST HORIZON IN THE MINE, HAVE, HOWEVER, BEEN FLOWN BACK TO POLAND AND A NEW CONSIGNMENT OF VERTICAL PUMPS TO SUIT THE JOB WOULD ARRIVE SOON."

6. THE HINDUSTAN TIMES OF JANUARY 5 REPORTS " FOUR OF THE FIVE SUBMERSIBLE RUSSIAN PUMPS WERE READY TO GO INTO ACTION IN NEXT 36 HOURS"; "TWO CARRIAGES FROM PIT NO 1 OF THE MINE HAVE BEEN PULLED OUT AND ENGINEERS WERE BUSY INSTALLING HIGH CAPACITY TRANSFORMERS REQUISITIONED FROM THE BOKARO STEEL PLANT."

7. OTHER PRESS REPORTS SAY AS A RESULT OF PUMPING OPERATIONS THE WATER LEVEL IN THE MINE HAD FALLEN 9.2 METERS WITH THE DRAINAGE OF 24 MILLION GALLONS AS OF SUNDAY EVENING. IT HAS ALSO UNCLASSIFIED

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BEEN REPORTED THAT THE POINT AT WHICH RESCUE OPERATIONS CAN BEGIN IS STILL ANOTHER 215 FEET DOWN.SAXBE

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